

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 4-8 and 10-19 is noted with appreciation. Claim 9 has been cancelled in favor of newly presented Claims 20-25, which have been drafted in accordance with U.S. practice.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Mitchell, U.S. Patent No. 6,221,162. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The present application claims the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of prior provisional application No. 60/097,618 filed August 24, 1998, which is before the earliest possible effective date of Mitchell, February 1, 1999. Claims 1-3 are supported by the '618 provisional application and, as such, are not properly subject to rejection on Mitchell. Claims 20-25 are likewise not subject to rejection on Mitchell.

Accordingly, the outstanding rejection under § 102(e) should be withdrawn.

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This application is believed to be clearly in condition for allowance.


The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been requested separately, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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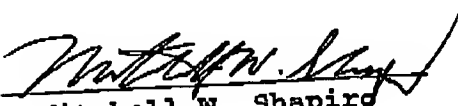
Miles & Stockbridge P.C.
1751 Pinnacle Drive, Suite 500
McLean, Virginia 22102-3833
(703) 903-9000
May 19, 2003

By:


Mitchell W. Shapiro
Reg. No. 31,568

CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office on May 19, 2003.


Mitchell W. Shapiro

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